

Personal / Small Group Sermon Study

Jesus Wants Us to Love and Respect His Bride

Week of May 7, 2017 A.D.

The church is the bride of Jesus. Jesus loves His bride and Jesus expects us to love His bride as well. Your love for the church and my love for the church matter big time to God. That is the focus of this lesson.

Read Ephesians 5:25-32

1. Please analyze, critique, and discuss each of the following statements in the order in which they are written: (1) "The church is a building where people meet for Christian worship." (2) "The church is an organization in which people study the Bible with the hope of becoming good people who can have a positive influence on society." (3) "The church is a body of people who are connected to one another through the power of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of glorifying God through obedience to Jesus."
2. Please explain the meaning of the verses found at Ephesians 5:25-27. Take it slowly and discuss each section or thought which is expressed in that sentence.
3. Based on your reading of Ephesians 5:25-27, how would you describe Jesus' love for the church? Please describe the personal relationship and interaction which is required between Jesus and the church for that kind of love to be real? Please explain.
4. Read Ephesians 5:29-30. Does Jesus expect those who believe in Him to (a) seek and develop relationships with each other? (b) know and love each other? and/or (c) work together on His behalf as a body? Please explain.
5. Does Jesus expect each believer to "feed and care for" the church? If not, why not? If so, why and how? Please explain each answer.
6. Using the number 1 as the top priority and the number 7 as the lowest priority, what order do you believe Jesus would assign to the following areas of your life: job; family; recreation; community service; relationships within your church family; relaxation; relationships outside of your church family. Please explain the reasoning for each priority in your answer.
7. Read Ephesians 5:31-32. Does Jesus love every person in the church with absolutely the same love? Please explain.

8. Can flesh be torn apart without doing serious damage to a person's body? Are husbands and wives "one flesh"? Are Christ and the church "one flesh"? Whenever it is possible to do so, does Jesus expect every Christian to be actively involved in the lives and ministries of the local church? Please explain your answers.

Read Galatians 6:9-10

9. Does Jesus expect us to know and to meet the needs of other believers? Does Jesus expect us to "belong to the family of believers"? Please explain your answers.
10. In your opinion, what behavior patterns and attitudes distinguish "a person who attends church" from "a person who belongs to the family of believers"? In your opinion, which of these two persons most likely (a) understands what is pleasing to God and (b) has a deeper relationship with Christ? Please explain your answers.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13

11. Who are "God's people"? Does God expect all of his people to do "works of service"? According to verse 12, what is the purpose for those works of service? Are those works of service to be done within the context of the church? Do these verses teach that every believer is to actively participate in the life of a local church body? Please explain.
12. Read verse 13. Can a believer "attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" without having regular fellowship and loving relationships within and among a church family? Please explain.
13. Does God want his "family" / "body" to be unified in their (a) faith? and (b) knowledge of the Son of God? If so, is such unity likely to grow if the members of a church family regularly meet with each other in small groups for the purpose of studying and discussing identical questions relating to the Bible verses which were the context of the pastor's weekly sermon? Please explain your answers.

Read Ephesians 4:14-16

14. Is Christianity a group effort? What are some of the obstacles which prevent Christians from (a) knowing each other in the body of Christ and (b) regularly spending time together in small groups? Are there any such obstacles in your life? If so, how do you intend to overcome them? Please explain your answers.

Consider: My commitment to Christ and His church (which includes a proper biblical commitment to my spouse and my children) is my first priority in life. All other commitments in my life have less importance for me in the eyes of God. If I am to fulfill the purposes for which I exist, I must be fully committed to Christ and His church. "You think about that." Amen.